

NSC BRIEFING NOTES  
25 May 1954  
NE/UK

BRITISH POLITICAL SITUATION AND INDOCHINA

- I. In parliament all indications point to government's having almost unanimous support, cutting across party lines, for:
  - A. its decision not to get into the Indochina fighting now;
  - B. its insistence on moving slowly towards a Southeast Asia defense pact;
  - C. and its attempts to negotiate at the Geneva conference.
- II. In the press, confidence in Foreign Secretary Eden is particularly marked:
  - A. He has won especial mention for:
    1. His "honest broker" role in East-West negotiations;
    2. His trying to bring Asian nations around to supporting a collective security plan for Southeast Asia.
  - B. Should Eden be forced, however, to report the failure of the Geneva talks, indications are he could probably win wide support for a "stronger government policy" towards Asian questions.

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III. Resentment in the press against American criticism of Britain's attitude is perhaps best summarized by The Times' Washington correspondent who on 18 May wrote:

"Britain has no Indochina policy and is keeping quiet about it. The United States has no Indochina policy and is talking about it at the top of its voice."

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